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Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

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Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum**

Contents

		Page
II.	Replies received from Governments	2
	Algeria	2
	Belgium	4
	Serbia	5

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Replies received from Governments

Algeria

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[22 July 2010]

Introduction

During its sixty-fourth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 64/68, whereby it once again reaffirmed the importance of promoting peace, strengthening development and building the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the peoples and countries of the Mediterranean region. Indeed, strengthening economic, social and cultural cooperation, combating terrorism and organized crime, and extending solidarity and assistance in order to confront, both individually and collectively, the multifaceted challenges facing the countries in the region are particularly important. These factors contribute not only to the stability and prosperity of the Mediterranean region, but also to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Algeria, which has always had an active Mediterranean policy based on the principles of cooperation and friendship, good neighbourliness and mutual respect, has consistently called for and worked towards the promotion of these principles and their implementation, particularly in the Mediterranean region.

Security and development in the Mediterranean Sea are also linked to peace, security and development in Africa: the challenges and difficulties threatening the stability of the African continent and damaging the well-being and prosperity of its peoples have repercussions for the Mediterranean region and destroy the capacity and potential for cooperation and assistance between the two sides. In that regard, mention can be made of two important developments that occurred between 2009 and 2010: the entry into force of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and Algeria's counter-terrorism initiative in the Sahel.

1. Entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty

With the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty in July 2009, a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa has become a reality. This important regional instrument, concluded in accordance with article VII of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, was opened for signature in April 1994 and is an essential step in promoting the goals of disarmament, peace and security in the African continent and in the surrounding areas, including the Mediterranean region.

The Pelindaba Treaty has not only created a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, but has also established the necessary mechanisms for promoting the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes by States parties, in accordance with article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This objective is also being pursued by the current establishment of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy, provided for in the Pelindaba Treaty.

Algeria, which was one of the first countries to sign and ratify the Pelindaba Treaty, has, since its adoption, continually stepped up and made the necessary efforts to promote its entry into force while hastening the establishment of the framework provided for in the Treaty. The full implementation of this instrument,

with the support of the International Atomic Energy Agency in particular, will undoubtedly make a substantial contribution towards promoting the development of nuclear energy in Africa. It should also afford the countries and peoples of Africa greater access to the benefits of using nuclear technologies in agriculture, water, health and the environment.

It is therefore necessary for the nuclear-weapon States, and the other State concerned, to sign and ratify the relevant protocols of the Pelindaba Treaty in order to ensure its full implementation and promotion.

The denuclearization of Africa and the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy on the continent are without question fundamental for strengthening peace and security in the Mediterranean region and around the world. They are also a valuable tool for the economic development of Africa and the promotion of cooperation between the two sides of the Mediterranean.

2. Algeria's counter-terrorism initiative in the Sahel

The increase in the number of terrorist acts committed by terrorist groups in the Sahel region has created a new situation, characterized by a persistent terrorist threat in those areas. Driven back by the ongoing confrontation with and pressure from the security forces in Algeria and other countries in the region, the members of this terrorist organization have chosen to live in the vast area of desert adjoining several States in the region. Their criminal activities are focused primarily on taking Western nationals as hostages and demanding ransom payments to finance their terrorist activities.

In addition, and at the initiative of Algeria, genuine regional cooperation to prevent and combat terrorism in the Sahel was established approximately three years ago. This covers not only the strategic and military operational framework, but also economic and social development programmes for the local population.

It was in that context that the Conference of Foreign Ministers of States of the Sahel region was held in Algiers in March 2010. The participants examined and identified the measures needed to combat terrorism and associated ills in the region. This conference is the first step in an important process; it was followed, in April, by a meeting of Chiefs of Staff of the armies and security services of the countries in the region. That meeting helped to identify practical and operational measures to ensure coordination between the security forces of the States concerned in combating the terrorist networks and their criminal activities. In addition, an operational centre has been set up in southern Algeria, with significant technical and logistical means.

Such cooperation is also seen in the implementation of training programmes for security and customs officers, provided by Algeria for the benefit of the countries in the region, to enable them to develop their relevant administrative, technical and operational capacities.

It is also important to highlight the role played by the African Union's African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism, which has its headquarters in Algiers. The Centre makes an important contribution towards preventing and combating terrorism and related phenomena, such as illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

In that regard, the Centre, together with the Governments of Italy and Germany, organized a workshop on cross-border arms trafficking in March 2010. The workshop brought together representatives of 14 West African countries and experts from the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the International Criminal Police Organization and the European Commission. The outcome was a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening relevant national capacities in the areas of customs, border controls and combating arms trafficking.

The worrying prevailing situation in the Sahel region has repercussions for the security and stability of the whole African continent. It requires a redoubling of efforts and a strengthening of cooperation between the countries in the region as they work to combat this scourge. It also requires significant support from the international community, from developed countries in particular, and from the relevant international organizations, in order to strengthen the capacities of the countries in the Sahel region to deal with these challenges.

Belgium

[Original: French]
[12 August 2010]

Belgium considers it very important that the European Union be surrounded by friendly nations which enjoy political stability and rapid economic growth.

Since 1995, relations between the European Union and the countries in the southern and eastern Mediterranean have been governed by the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, also known as the Barcelona Process, which was relaunched as a multilateral body, the Union for the Mediterranean, at the Paris Summit of 13 July 2008. The dialogue and cooperation established within that framework remain an important objective of Belgium's foreign policy in this region. The Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements, which serve as a bridge between most of the Maghreb and Mashreq countries and the European Union, contain policy dialogue for addressing sensitive issues such as human rights. Belgium's approach helps to build awareness on the importance of strengthening, inter alia, good governance, the rule of law, democracy, the economy and education.

The European Neighbourhood Policy, established in 2004, complements and strengthens the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership through bilateral plans of action concluded with most of the Mediterranean countries. These plans cover many areas ranging from policy dialogue and reform to economic and social cooperation and also address cooperation in the areas of justice, security and liberty. Belgium continues to encourage its Mediterranean partners fully to implement the plans of action adopted in the framework of the structures set out in the Association Agreements.

Outside the context of Europe, Belgium is also paying close attention to the Mediterranean Dialogue under way in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Belgium's security policy is shaped on the basis of this multilateral context, including its membership of these two organizations.

The NATO Mediterranean Dialogue, launched in 1994, currently involves seven countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. It primarily reflects the importance that NATO attaches to regional stability and to

maintaining transparency vis-à-vis its neighbouring countries. The Mediterranean Dialogue is carried out at various levels, and has both multilateral and bilateral dimensions. Partners can build on this dialogue in accordance with their own priorities and their individual cooperation programme. This cooperation covers policy dialogue and a practical dimension ranging across matters of public diplomacy, working groups and seminars. It also has a military dimension, including such aspects as counter-terrorism activities and weapons of mass destruction.

The OSCE Mediterranean Dialogue involves the same countries except Mauritania, and focuses mainly on cooperation and the sharing of political and military, economic, environmental and human experiences. Discussions cover topics such as building confidence, fostering standards of conduct, addressing new threats to security and stability and adopting a global approach to security.

Lastly, Belgium welcomes any regional initiative aiming to strengthen ties among countries in the Mediterranean area, particularly through building strong and fruitful economic and trade relations. Thus, Belgium considers the Agadir Agreement — which was signed in 2004 and entered into force in March 2007 and which creates a free trade area between the signatory countries (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia) — to be one of the region's more important initiatives fostering economic growth and stabilization. Belgium is also closely following the efforts by the member States of the Arab Maghreb Union to bring the Union out of its deadlock, and to set up an effective mechanism for cooperation among the countries of the Maghreb.

Serbia

[Original: English]
[3 August 2010]

Serbia is a next-door neighbour to the countries of the Mediterranean region and is fully supportive of the existing multilateral initiatives, mechanisms and processes aimed at developing cooperation, promoting dialogue and common activities with regard to strengthening the security and stability of the Mediterranean region.

In view of the fact that it has embarked upon the irreversible process of European integration and that it has invested great efforts and conducted comprehensive activities in order to comply with its international obligations and to strengthen its internal capacities to join the European Union, Serbia is committed to European Union mechanisms and efforts aimed at improving political and security dialogue with the Mediterranean region, and supports the building of a common zone of security and stability.

Through mechanisms and instruments of cooperation, both regional and global, Serbia has been actively cooperating in strengthening European security, and has been a staunch supporter of its indivisibility. It fully respects the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations and other instruments in this field. With the aim of maintaining its own territorial integrity and sovereignty, as well as developing good-neighbourly relations and regional cooperation, Serbia welcomes all the efforts of the countries of the Mediterranean region, international organizations and institutions that will, in the future, contribute to a positive influence of the achieved level of security and stability of the region on its economic development, social security and the protection of basic human rights and freedoms.